

Contact

Magazine for and about members of the 349th Air Mobility Wing
Travis Air Force Base, California

Vol. 18, No. 8

August 2000



**Take a trip on a
routine C-5 mission...**

see story, pages 6-7



Commander's Corner

by Col. James T. Rubeor
349th AMW Commander



I made it to the B Flight UTA in July and discovered yet more great people assigned to the 349th AMW! What a great unit! I'm looking forward to attending the A Flight UTA but it will have to wait until September because of a TDY to March ARB in August.

For those of you who haven't heard, the 4th Air Force commander, **Maj. Gen. Wallace Whaley**, will relinquish command to **Brig. Gen. James P. Czekanski** on August 6 in a ceremony at March ARB, Calif. **General Whaley** has been a great commander for 4th AF and a great supporter of us here at the 349th AMW. As a former commander of the 349th, many of you knew him from his assignment here! We wish he and his wife, **Isabel**, continued success in their new assignment as the AFRC/DO at Robins AFB, Ga. **General Czekanski** comes to us with a long and distinguished career in AFRC and is very well versed in the air mobility business. I look forward to working with him and representing the great people of the 349th AMW at his change of command.

How many of you made it to the airshow here at Travis last month? What a great success Air Expo 2000 was! We estimate that more than 250,000 people visited the base and more than a million more heard of it through local media. It was a great opportunity for us to show the public what we do here at Team Travis and how we are careful stewards of public funds. In particular I want to thank all the volunteers who came out and helped with all the booths. You make our success possible! The money you helped earn for your unit's morale and welfare funds will be most welcome! For those of you looking forward to next year's show, we are trying to get the Canadian aerial demonstration team, the Snow Birds. Should be another great airshow!

We conducted a wing board last month to select some of our deserving young airmen and officers to attend Undergraduate Flying Training. Selection to attend this most prestigious of Air Force training schools is very competitive but is open to everyone in the 349th AMW who meets the entry requirements. We'll have a pilot in one of our four flying squadrons write an article for next month's *Contact* about what credentials a successful candidate typically has but the point I want to make is this: we are looking for good candidates and we prefer reservists right here from our own unit. We're looking for proven winners with a strong track record and good work habits and we know where to find them - right here at the 349th AMW!

Thanks to every who enrolled in ATWIND! Team Travis is more than 10 million miles ahead of the second place base. If you haven't enrolled yet, the introductory piece is free. Log in at www.atwind.com to register. The introductory game piece number is 021 178 9014. If you went to a commander's call in July, you're eligible for a second game piece and if you update your Air Force Form 93, the emergency data card, in August, you get a third. This puts you at Lajes in the Azores and you're in the hunt! To continue around the world, look in the weekly editions of the base paper, the Tailwind, for events that qualify. So for those of you who received a game piece at the July commanders call but choose not to play, please turn your game piece in to your orderly room for reissue to someone else. Amazingly, even though we are 10 million miles ahead, only 40 percent of all the game pieces issued at Travis have been registered! But I'd rather see you or your family enter and play because someone at Travis is going to win \$1,000!

A quick update on billeting. I received a super briefing from **SMSgt. Pat McReynolds** and **MSgt. Tony Cooper** on the conclusions of their PAT. The short-term solution is to decrease the commute distance and we're working with **Tim Wible**, the lodging general manager, to make sure the rooms are available and **John McLaughlin**, our financial manager to make sure we have the money. The long-term fix is going to be more on-base billeting and we're working with **Lt. Col. Truman Lum**, **Lt. Col. Jerry Matthies**, **TSgt. Martin Walker** and the base civil engineers to make sure our needs are addressed in the base master plan. Our vision is a commute distance of one hour or 50 miles, whichever is less. It may take us awhile but we're committed to giving you a quality environment for you to perform the great work you do for our country!

A warm welcome to our newest commander, **Lt. Col. Steve Vancil** and his wife, **Sanae**. Steve's been in the 70th ARS since it first came to Travis, but he recently took command from **Lt. Col. Jim Lynott**. Jim is moving on to assume his position as the vice wing commander of the second best wing in AFRC, the 452nd AMW at March ARB, Calif! We want to thank **Jim** and his wife **Pat** for all their great contributions and wish them well in their new assignment.

That's all for now! See you at the UTA! ➔

Command Chief Master Sergeant's Corner

by CMSgt. Anthony L. Maddux

Motivating people is one of the most difficult leadership skills to master. Many times we make wrong assumptions about what people want and need to perform their jobs. For example, if money was the only motivator, then we could solve our problems by just giving people more money.

However, as members of the armed services, we have a special calling to place service before self and practice excellence in all we do to defend the national security of the country. How can we inspire our people to not only know the Air Force core values, but also more importantly, live these values? I believe we do have the power to influence our people to be their personal best while performing the mission.

First, give people clear goals to accomplish the mission. Then provide timely feedback on their progress. And finally, recognize their contributions to the mission. Awards and decorations are very important because they foster morale, act as an incentive and maintain an ideal level of esprit de corps. Air Force personnel are given awards and decorations to recognize services or acts which are distinctly outstanding by nature and of a magnitude that may not be recognized in any other way.

Although we do not have direct control over the awards and decorations program, we can have significant influence in planning and preparing awards for our people. Often our people are not considered for decorations simply because the system does not always automatically remind us. Therefore, it is important we take responsibility to develop and recognize our people. Most of all, do not base awards on rank, but rather on the level of responsibility and achievement the person has accomplished. Motivation can make most anything possible and good leaders are the key in motivating people. ✈



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Catch up on the latest Air Force, AFRC and 349th AMW news.

On the cover:

(Top left) Pilots Capt. Chris Womick and Maj. Marcus Vincent and Maj. Toby Brewer pre-flight the Elmendorf-to-Travis leg of the mission. (Top right) Loadmaster MSgt Ken Milken runs his checklist prior to closing the aft cargo doors. (Bottom left) Loadmaster MSgt Clyde E. Shavies adjusts the public address system. (Bottom right) Loadmaster SSgt. Steve Johanson coaxes in the K-loader prior to off-loading at Andersen AFB, Guam.

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Vol. 18, No. 8 August 2000
<http://www.travis.af.mil/pages/349pa>

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Recruiter sends message through dance

by SSgt. Shayne Sewell

Plants, animals, wind, and water are some of the images represented by hoops that one recruiter uses to perform his Hoop Dance at Powwow's across the nation. TSgt. David N. Wahyahneetah Welch, 349th Air Mobility Wing recruiter in Alameda, Calif., is an Eastern Cherokee and Catawba Native American from the Cherokee Reservation in North Carolina.

He has been dancing since he was 4 years old. At age 12, he learned how to hoop dance from his cousin, Eddie Swimmer, a national champion hoop dancer for the American Indian Dance Theater.

Welch recently performed at the Summer 2000 Honoring Mother Earth Powwow in Vallejo, Calif., presented by the Vallejo Inter-Tribal Council and San Francisco Title IX. The hoop dance origin is believed to be from either the southwestern Nations or the Tribes along the Great Lakes. It started as a courtship dance where a shy young man who couldn't express his feelings verbally was given a vision through hoops to express his feelings and also impress a girl in whom he was interested. Over the years the meaning of the

hoop dance has changed.

The modern hoop dance is a broad representation of Native American spiritualism. The dancer uses the hoops to create images of natural elements such as plants, animals, wind and water according to his or her personal interpretation.

For Welch, one hoop represents the circle of life. When he weaves the hoop through his body that image represents the struggle of life. He then adds other hoops and weaves them through his body to represent birds, plants, wind, and water. "The key image lies at the end of the hoop dance when I have all of the hoops on me — that represents the eagle," said Welch. "The eagle is the most revered and sacred bird to



TSgt David N. Welch

The hoop dance itself is unique, but what is also unique is the way Welch uses it to get a message across to young people about the Air Force Reserve.

When he performs the dance at high schools, the two globes represent the civilian world and the Air Force Reserve world. "I use the hoop dance performance as a way to show diversity in the Air Force. It also gives me a chance to show how the two worlds can work together. I try to get the message across that the Air Force Reserve provided me with incredible opportunities that I would not otherwise have had if I stayed on the reservation. This allows me to visually show diversity and it enables me to explain cultural awareness while still promoting the Air Force Reserve," said Welch.

He has performed his hoop dance at more than 50 high schools in one year while stationed at Scott Air Force Base, Ill. He performs one hoop dance a month at local high schools in the Bay Area. He has performed at countless Powwow's across the U.S., Europe and Japan. "You have to find the people where they are at," said Welch. "Usually they don't come to you."

Part contortionist, part fancy dancer, part storyteller, part recruiter; Welch goes "Above and Beyond" using his coordination, athletic ability, and his communication skills to recruit for the Air Force Reserve. ✈



Welch intertwines hoops on his body in preparation for the eagle.

the Native American and is believed to be a messenger. Every vein represents a dead warrior who defended his people," said Welch.

Once he has all of the hoops on him he somehow weaves them up his arms and down his legs to look like a soaring eagle. At the end of the dance, Welch removes 25 of the 32 hoops from his body as they miraculously stay connected to form a globe. That globe of hoops is set on the ground. The remaining 12 hoops are removed from his body to form a smaller globe which is placed into the larger globe representing the Indian world and the non-Indian world. "The globes fitting together is my way of showing that the two cultures can get along and blend together," said Welch.



PHOTOS BY SSGT. SHAYNE SEWELL

Welch represents an eagle during his hoop dance July 16.

Employers take to the skies

by Maj. Anne F. Macdonald

The 349th Support Group held its annual Employer Support Flight July 8, and according to enthusiastic participants, the experience was certainly an eye-opener.

"I never thought it possible to see two huge planes refueling in mid air just a few feet from each other, and the pilots not even sweating!" said Maryvel Gonzales, who works for the U.S. Postal Service and supervises MSgt. Juan Gomez, 349th Security Forces Squadron.

More than two dozen civilian employers and supervisors of 349th Reservists made the trek to Travis for the event, showing up early in the morning for a continental breakfast and briefings by 349th wing commander, Col. James Rubeor, and aircrew members. Special guest Maj. Gen. John M. Miller also offered his own special perspective on the Reserve program. General Miller is the Individual Mobilization Augmentee to Maj. Gen. Tony Robertson, commander of Air

Mobility Command.

The employers then went out to the flightline, where they toured both a C-5, and a KC-10 before breaking up into two groups, and boarding their



PHOTO BY MAJ. ANNE F. MACDONALD
Employer Vicky Porter from Schaefer Elementary School, Santa Rosa, Calif., is buckled into the cockpit.

respective aircraft for the two-hour flight. Although the weather was a bit cloudy, obscuring the normally pristine view of the Cascades, and Mt. Shasta in particular, the refueling

maneuvers thoroughly impressed everyone, both on the tanker and the Galaxy. "The precision and teamwork were incredible," said George Senn, of SJI, who was sponsored by SMSgt. Kim Shelby, 349th Mission Support Squadron. "They made something very difficult look seamless and very easy."

Added Steve Clapper, of Panamsat, whose reserve employee is SSgt. Brandon Kraus, 349th Civil Engineering Squadron, "The flight was a lot more involved than I imagined. I knew there was a lot of skill involved, but I was also impressed by the technology."

The 349th sponsors up to four employer orientation flights per year. Any bona fide employer, manager or supervisor who has a say in when a reservist can take time off from the job, is eligible for this unique chance to see Reservists in action. Make plans now to invite your boss next year.

And special thanks to MSgt. Steve Wilson, 349th CES, who volunteered to drive the bus! ➔

Air Force ensures those at highest risk are vaccinated

WASHINGTON (AFPN) — The Air Force is taking action in response to details outlined recently by Deputy Secretary of Defense Rudy de Leon on the temporary slowing of the Anthrax Vaccine Immunization Program. This slow down was necessary because of limitations in the supply of FDA-approved safe and effective vaccine.

According to a July 17 policy letter signed by the deputy secretary, those deployed for at least 30 days to the high-risk theaters of Southwest Asia and Korea will continue to be vaccinated. Vaccinations for personnel deploying to these areas should begin prior to arrival in theater and

are authorized to begin up to 45 days prior to deployment.

Upon return from the high-threat areas, further immunizations will be deferred. According to DOD policy, people who have to defer immunizations will not need to restart the series unless they only receive one dose and then wait more than two years before they get a second dose.

The Air Force is working with DOD officials to redistribute its supply of anthrax vaccine as needed to support the Defense Department directed slowdown. According to de Leon, the program will resume fully once the Defense Department has

additional FDA-approved vaccine.

"In the meantime, the other pillars our Force Health Protection Program — protective gear, biological agent detectors and antibiotic treatment — will help protect people at risk," de Leon said.

Programs to educate and inform Air Force people about the biological agent threat and the safety and effectiveness of the anthrax vaccine will continue during the period of slowed implementation and upon full program resumption.

More information on this immunization program can be found at the AVIP Web Site: <http://www.anthrax.osd.mil>. ➔

C-5 crew flies routine pacific

Story and photos by Maj. Anne F. Macdonald

As channel missions go, the one flown by the 301st Airlift Squadron in the middle of June was nothing special; long days, some really short nights, minimum ground time, plus heat, humidity, and back-breaking labor interspersed with hours of tedious flying over the rumpled blue silk of the Pacific Ocean.

According to most of the crew this one was pretty much like the dozens they've flown before: Travis Air Force Base, Calif., to Hickam AFB, Hawaii, to Andersen AB, Guam, to Kadena AB, Japan, to Yokota AB, Japan, to Elmendorf AFB, Alaska, and back home to Travis; 13,146 miles flown, 30 hours in the air, 220 passengers and 206 tons of cargo moved: it all added up to a pretty routine run.

"Every once in a while, we get to haul something unique, like a Navy special operations boat," said MSgt. Ken Milkent, a member of the wing since 1987. "It had a special trailer that hauled it aboard. Then we unhooked the trailer, drove it around to the back of the C-5, and parked it behind the boat. That filled up the entire cargo compartment."

Most of the time, the crew has no idea what is on the pallets; what concerns them are the weight and balance of the entire load. The heaviest load is in the middle, then it lightens towards each end. This means that as the cargo is shifted at each stop, pallets must often be moved off and back on the airplane to insure the correct balance is maintained.

"I enjoy the whole loading thing," said MSgt. Clyde Shavies. "I like the challenge of figuring the load plan, I



Aircraft Commander Maj. Randy Peterson runs over flight procedures in the C-5 cockpit.

like to use my noggin and try to plan ahead for what's next. Things don't always go as planned, and you have to keep your sense of humor. You'll go batty if you don't."

Passengers are another story. It's the loadmasters' responsibility to arrange for the care and feeding of anywhere from five to 73 passengers during the course of this trip. Ranging from retirees and dependent children to active duty of all services, passengers on this trip are mostly invisible to the rest of the crew (except when a VIP, who gets special treatment commensurate with rank, is aboard), but even the best-behaved group keeps the loadmasters hopping. Serving and cleaning up after meals, keeping the compartment temperature at a comfortable level, and ensuring the latrines are serviceable are just a few of the duties.

Although they don't have to battle with cargo pallets in the often stifling cargo compartment, the pilots and flight engineers have their own critical part to play in the success of this mission. Sitting at their complex, dial-studded panel behind the pilots, the engineers monitor every system aboard the giant aircraft. Electrical, hydraulics, and avionics systems, flight controls, communications, navigation, engines, temperature and oxygen controls. To the untrained eye, the amount of information displayed is confusing at best and ultimately overwhelming.

The engineers are among the first on the plane, running their copious checklists. "Once we've done our job, it's up to the pilots to push the yoke," said flight examiner MSgt. Tony Digiaco.

To Digiaco, a 26-year C-5 veteran engineer, the flight deck with all its myriad dials and gauges is home. In the cockpit for the entire trip, Digiaco seems to know what the C-5 is going to do before it happens. A true

**Loadmaster
AIC Mike
Miller
delivers the
passenger
safety
briefing in
the C-5
troop
compartment.**



mission: see how it all works

Flight Engineer TSgt. Walt LaForteza completes essential paperwork in the crew compartment of the C-5 Galaxy.



multi-tasker before the term was coined, Digiacoimo is also acting in his capacity as an instructor, training flight engineer SSgt. Jon Jose during this flight. Although Jose is a licensed pilot in civilian life, he has his work cut out for him to satisfy the demanding Digiacoimo, hitting the books during his down time.

Primary engineer TSgt. Walt LaForteza, rounds out the group, bringing a wealth of experience, both in the C-141 and in the C-5, to this mission. "Sometimes it's challenging working with the Air Terminal Operations Center folks, especially if we have more experience than they have. The biggest thing is that we have to be practical, and we have to communicate that to ATOC."

This mission is a little different for the pilots, especially for Maj. Sel. Marcus Vincent, who is taking his operational mission evaluation from Maj. Randy Peterson. Vincent will be the aircraft commander until he completes this check ride, then Peterson will take over that role. To pass, Vincent has to complete a multi-mission overseas, and be recommended by his instructor pilot. After he lands at Andersen, Vincent has his qualification.

Peterson is also responsible for supervising Capt. Chris Womick, who is just out of pilot training and is taking his C-5 familiarization, or "dollar" ride. Peterson, a Delta Airlines pilot, handles his triple pilot-evaluator-instructor role with confidence.

For all the activity taking place up here, the atmosphere on the flight deck is quiet and low-key. That is until the little indicator labeled 'thrust reverser not locked' suddenly flashes amber. Peterson and co-pilot Maj. Sel. Toby Brewer whip out the checklists, while Jose takes off to make a visual check of No. 1 engine. After a few minutes of intense conversation, the pilots determine that the problem is most likely with the indicator, rather than the thrust reverser. They decide to shut down the engine

anyway and declare an emergency. Once again, calm reigns. The landing is uneventful and the C-5 is handed over to the maintenance experts.

"We routinely train for emergency procedures," said Peterson. "Engine shutdown is something we practice a lot. We train for the worst-case scenario, so when something happens, it's more routine than exciting."

So why do they do it? "I take a lot of pride in my work and in myself," said SrA. Mike Miller, the youngest of the group, and a "Reserve baby." "My brother told me all about the Reserve, so I knew what I was getting into. But these channel missions are so new for me. We don't spend enough time in any of these places we go."

"The best is traveling to new places; the worst is getting up at all hours, or hassles in the system that prevent you from getting your job done," said loadmaster SSgt. Steve Johanson. "Otherwise, it's the best job I've had in the military. I've traveled more in the last two and a half years than I have in the other 17."

For Digiacoimo, who revels in the sheer enjoyment of his profession, it's the opportunity to pass on his standards and knowledge to the next generation. "I have to figure out what is important to the young people, how to relate what we're doing here to their lives," he explained. "That way, we'll keep the best people in the Reserve."

Seven days, six sorties, four hotels and one in-flight emergency later, the crew is eager to get home. Constantly changing times, sleeping and eating at odd hours, and even losing and gaining a day have all taken their toll. They'll go home, rest, do the laundry. Odds are, given the frequency of these missions, some members of this crew will probably be heading out again within the month. But for these Reservists, veterans and trainees alike, "it's all just part of the job." ✈



Flight Engineer MSgt. Tony Digiacoimo runs checklist procedures while training Flight Engineer SSgt. Jon Jose.

Reservists assist Isleton community

by Capt. Tania L. Daniels

From Chicago to San Antonio, Hispanics know that the word concilio means council – a place to get social services and help for Spanish-speaking people. The same is true in California's capital region where concilios have existed in one form or another since the 1960s.

One such concilio, located in the city of Isleton, just 20 miles east of Travis Air Force Base, is partnering with the 349th Air Mobility Wing to reach out to the local community. "The Galt Community Concilio has been providing services to the Latino population for over 24 years, with offices located in Galt, Isleton and Walnut Grove," said Sharon Giles, the Concilio's director. "The services we provide include food closets, a health clinic for low-income patients without insurance, transportation, immigration services and a job search program in conjunction with the Galt Career Center."

"To Latinos, a concilio represents a home away from home, somewhere they can get help and respect in a safe environment," said Rosemary Garietz, a Galt Concilio official. "We help everyone."

Some of this help will now be provided by Travis

reservists since the Isleton health clinic recently partnered with the 349th AMW and Lodi Memorial Hospital. The community outreach clinic is now staffed, two days a month, by wing volunteers from the 349th Medical Group and 349th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron. These reservists provide family practice

medical services to a local population which is 37 percent Hispanic. Physicals, immunizations and basic medical care are all part of the assistance provided.

Lodi Memorial Hospital is also providing appropriate medical equipment to support the family clinic services as well as immunization supplies.

Travis reservists provide medical support, to include medical personnel, record management and registration. Funding for these Reserve volunteers to staff the clinic comes from mandays and annual tour.

The Isleton community, however, is not the only group who will benefit from this partnership. Wing members who volunteer their services will gain hands-on clinic exposure, which many of them do not receive in their non-medically related civilian jobs.

"This is a long-term commitment to the people of Isleton," said Col. James T. Rubeor, 349th AMW commander. "We want to give back to the local communities which have given so much to us." ➔



A 349th Medical Group nurse takes blood pressure of a Galt community resident.

349th Logistics Group Maintenance Senior NCO, NCO and Airman of quarter

Second quarter 2000

MSgt. Jeff M. Richardson (349th LSS)
Senior NCO of Quarter
TSgt. Dennis M. Thorpe (749th AGS)
NCO of Quarter
Amm. Travis A. Mollanen (349th AGS)
Airman of Quarter

Third quarter 2000

MSgt. Gary A. Lewis (349th EMS)
Senior NCO of Quarter
TSgt. William A. Heliker (349th AGS)
NCO of Quarter
Sra. Clifford J.C. Bumanglag (749th AGS)
Airman of Quarter

How to prepare for a physical exam

by Lt. Col. (Dr.) James H. Clingan
349th Aerospace Medicine Squadron

The 349th Aerospace Medicine Squadron is responsible for completing physicals for Reserve personnel three weekends each month.

Reservists come and get their Short Fly Physicals every year, Long Fly exams every three years and Non Fly physicals every five years. The squadron also sees many patients for occupational physicals, induction physicals and profile evaluations. Each squadron is responsible for scheduling of their medical exams.

Physicals start at 8 a.m. Saturday of each UTA (unless otherwise directed). A Short Fly physical includes: hearing test, height, weight, blood pressure, vision screening and exam with a flight surgeon. A Long Fly Exam or a Periodic Non Fly Physical also includes fasting lab tests (including Prostate Specific Antigen for males over 50), eye pressure tests and an electrocardiogram, if over 35 years old and have never had one before).

Do:

- ✓ Bring information such as Air Force speciality code numbers, unit phone numbers and shot records.
- ✓ Bring eyeglass prescriptions (current within 2 years) and the glasses or contacts (if on the contact lens program)
- ✓ Documentation from private physician such as a copy of gynecology exam for women, mammogram reports and Pap smear cytology reports (must be within 11 months of physical). Also any records of significant health problems since last physical exam (such as injuries, surgeries, new diagnoses, and regular medications). Documentation of any vaccine allergies or reactions.

- ✓ Bring copies, if possible, of dental x-rays ("bitewings or panoramic x-ray taken within the past 12 months).
- ✓ Take a number at the immunization clinic if crowded.
- ✓ Bring health records whenever possible to each section.
- ✓ Undergraduate pilot training candidates must go to the Eye Clinic before 10 a.m. to get eyes dilated.
- ✓ If on prescription medication, continue to take that medicine with a sip of water the morning of the physical.

Don't:

- ✓ Wear contacts for 72 hours prior to exam.
- ✓ Eat after dinner the night before lab tests, but **do** drink water! (Test may include a urine sample).
- ✓ Drink any alcohol for 72 hours prior to lab work.
- ✓ Take a hearing test if been ill the week prior to the exam.
- ✓ Be exposed to loud noises 14 hours prior to hearing test.
- ✓ Expect to be "in and out". Bring paper work to do or a good book to read.

Other:

- ✓ Reservists need to be profiled as soon as they find out they are pregnant (they are required to bring in documentation from their doctors showing expected delivery date and any complications they may have).
- ✓ Reserve physicians are not authorized to treat any individuals during UTA weekends.
- ✓ Patients who need to go to sick call are directed to the Primary Care Clinic at David Grant Medical Center. Emergencies are evaluated at the emergency room.

Anyone needing additional information can contact the 349th AMDS at (707) 424-3812 or FAX (707) 424-3813. ➔

Same mission, new name for 349th medical units

Old Organizational Name

- 349TH MEDICAL SQUADRON
- 349TH CONTINGENCY HOSPITAL
- DET 1, 349TH CONTINGENCY HOSPITAL
- DET 2, 349TH CONTINGENCY HOSPITAL

New Organizational Name

- 349TH AEROSPACE MEDICINE SQUADRON
- 349TH MEDICAL SQUADRON
- DET 1, 349TH MEDICAL SQUADRON
- DET 2, 349TH MEDICAL SQUADRON

***THERE IS NO CHANGE TO THE 349TH AEROMEDICAL STAGING SQUADRON.**

NEW DENTAL PLAN EXPANDS SERVICES, INCLUDES RESERVISTS

WASHINGTON (AFPN) -- The Defense Department's new TRICARE Dental Program will feature lower premiums, expanded services and cost ceilings, and will allow reservists and their families to enroll.

DOD awarded a \$1.8 billion, five-year contract in April to United Concordia Companies Inc. of Camp Hill, Pa., the current TRICARE Family Member Dental Plan administrator. Changes take effect Feb. 1, 2001. "One of the most significant changes is that reserve component members and their families will be eligible to enroll," said Navy Capt. Lawrence D. McKinley, the TRICARE Management Activity's senior consultant for dentistry.

During the first two years of the contract, premiums for active-duty family members will drop from the current levels. The \$8.53 single and \$21.33 family rates will drop to \$7.63 and \$19.08 respectively during the first year, and remain below current levels even during the second year. Premiums for reservists on extended active duty and their families will mirror those of active-duty members, however premiums for families of reservists not on active duty will be somewhat higher. After the first two years, premiums may rise, but "will remain very reasonable," McKinley said. Other improvements include:

- The enrollment "lock-in" period falls from 24 months to 12. That is, active duty members must have 12 months left on their current term of service to enroll. Reservists must "express intent" to remain in the reserves for at least 12 consecutive months.

- United Concordia will take over enrollment responsibilities from the services' personnel offices. McKinley said this should improve customer service by allowing beneficiaries to deal directly with the contractor. Current enrollees will automatically transfer to the new system.

- The annual maximum for general dentistry increases from \$1,000 to \$1,200, and the lifetime maximum for orthodontic care goes from \$1,200 to \$1,500.

- General anesthesia and intravenous sedation will be covered.

- Coverage of diagnostic and preventive services expands.

Most of the changes stem from customer feedback. "We've been listening to the beneficiaries. We've incorporated as many of their suggestions as possible," McKinley said. "We also listened to concerns from line commanders about dental readiness and the quality of life of their people." He also said DOD officials constantly monitor civilian insurance programs. The new TRICARE plan, he said, "easily matches most insurance programs of Fortune 500 companies and is better than many."

For more information, beneficiaries can call United Concordia's toll-free customer-service line, 1-800-866-8499.

"EAF ONLINE" OFFERS ELECTRONIC GATEWAY FOR AEF DEPLOYMENTS

LANGLEY AIR FORCE BASE, Va. (AFPN) -- To help ensure people deploying as part of the Expeditionary Aerospace Force concept are fully prepared for their arrival in theater, the Aerospace Expeditionary Force Center will unveil the first version of an electronic one stop shop for AEF deployments April 15.

Called EAF Online, the Web site will feature training templates airmen can access to obtain information on actions they need to complete -- specific to their Air Force Specialty Code -- before deploying, said Lt. Col. Gordon Bennett, the Web site project officer. The restricted Web site will only be available via military computers at EAF Online.

The April 15 version will feature training templates for communications, legal and maintenance AFSCs deploying for Operation Southern Watch. The completed version with training templates for all AFSCs deploying to support any steady state deployment will be available by October, Bennett said.

"The goal is to have EAF Online serve as the backbone for all AEF actions for people deploying to support Air Force worldwide operations," he said. "We want everyone identified for an AEF deployment to go to this site first to obtain the information on actions they need to complete so they are ready to hit the ground running when they arrive at their deployed location."

Those actions include required training, shots, and qualifications for each AFSC and location. Once logged onto EAF Online -- accomplished by entering a career field, AEF number, deployment location and home base in specific fields -- people can access the requirements and training needed for the deployment, such as weapons, chemical warfare and air base ground defense. The site will also feature force protection and geopolitical issues, lessons learned from previous rotations and links to related news articles.

"We want to make people smart and do as much training as we can on this side of the ocean," the colonel said. "This will benefit the people on the other side of the ocean when they receive a fully-trained, fully-briefed airman."

Conducting briefings and training on this side of the ocean also has positive implications for the large number of reserve forces filling AEF taskings according to Bennett. "Giving reservists the ability to obtain their training and complete their requirements at home will pay off big down the line, and make this critical portion of our Air Force even more effective in a deployed environment," Bennett said. Air National Guard and Reserve members are filling approximately 10 percent of the AEF taskings.

As the Web site is developed other aspects such as "Right Start" briefings, travel arrangements, and issues such as orders, pay and outprocessing actions will be

added.

Bennett stressed that EAF Online's success depends on feedback from airmen in the field. The Web site will let users provide feedback directly to the AEF Center. "We hope people of all specialties will visit the site, and suggest ways to improve our information. The site is for the deploying troop -- we are trying to present information they will need, and consider valuable. Feedback is essential for our success," he said.

The October upgrade to EAF Online will also benefit commanders by allowing them to track the readiness status of their units and people. More importantly, it will help them manage individual operations tempo by providing a database of assigned people that can be sorted in various fields, including number of days already spent on temporary duty assignments.

The AEF Center is a centralized, cross-functional, total force team designed to facilitate EAF operations. Its mission is to assist EAF operations in the sourcing of AEF assets, identifying and refining training requirements, monitoring readiness, and guiding deployment and redeployment planning.

UPDATED EYE SURGERY MEDICAL WAIVER POLICY RELEASED

BOLLING AIR FORCE BASE, Washington D.C. - Air Force Medical Service officials recently released the Air Force's updated accession medical waiver policy for individuals with a history of corneal refractive surgery.

Changes to the policy include the addition of Laser Assisted In-Situ Keratomileusis, commonly referred to as LASIK, to the list of corneal refractive surgeries that can be considered for medical waiver during accession. The only other surgery included in the policy is photorefractive keratectomy, or PRK.

Waivers are still not being considered for individuals who have had radial keratotomy or any other corneal refractive surgery. According to Air Force medical officials, a separate waiver policy for aviation and special duty personnel who have had the PRK procedure will be published in the near future. When published, PRK waivers for aviation and special duty personnel will be limited. Currently, waivers for LASIK are not allowed for aviation and special duty personnel.

Individuals who have had PRK or LASIK may be considered for enlistment, commissioning and appointment waiver, if they meet the criteria outlined in the policy. The criteria includes the following:

- * Pre-operative refractive error does not exceed +/- 8.00 diopters (spherical equivalent) in either eye.

- * Post-procedure best spectacle corrected visual acuity is 20/20 in each eye that had the procedure. (Note: this is more stringent than accession standards for those who have not had corneal refractive surgery, due to the somewhat higher risk PRK and LASIK poses to vision)

- * At least 12 months have passed since the date of

the last surgery or most recent enhancement procedure.

- * No significant side effects secondary to the surgery affect daily activities.

- * Stable post-op refraction defined as two refractions has been performed six months apart with no more than 0.50 diopter change in the spherical equivalent of either eye.

- * Ophthalmologic exam reveals no lattice degeneration, retinal detachment or other ocular pathology associated with myopia or hyperopia.

Required documentation:

- * Documentation of all the above information from the surgeon performing the procedure.

- * Current comprehensive eye examination performed by an ophthalmologist or optometrist. This evaluation must address each of the waiver criteria.

- * Copies of all medical records including the pre-operative eye examination (noting refractive error and keratometry readings), all operative reports (or procedure notes), and all follow-up notes. These should be included in the health records.

For more information on this policy, contact your First Sergeant or Orderly Room.

RESERVISTS HELP CREATE 'THE PERFECT STORM'

ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, Ga. (AFPN) -- In recent years, the Air Force has become more involved in supporting major Hollywood film productions. The latest big-screen venture is "The Perfect Storm," a Warner Brothers feature film released June 30 in theaters nationwide.

"We've been on a long roll for the last three or four years with the biggest summer movies involving the Air Force," said Chuck Davis, chief of television and motion pictures in the Air Force's regional public affairs office in Los Angeles. "Other major productions involving the Air Force in recent years are 'Air Force One,' 'Armageddon' and 'Tomorrow Never Dies.'"

In a scene from "The Perfect Storm," members of the Air Force Reserve Command's 305th Rescue Squadron, Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz., and the Air National Guard's 129th Rescue Wing, Moffett Field, Calif., simulated the rescue of stranded fishermen off the coast of New England. "The production team was very interested in keeping the Air Force's participation as accurate as possible, which is one of the reasons we got involved," said Col. Kent Clark, 305th RQS commander.

Based on a book of the same title by author Sebastian Junger, film director Wolfgang Petersen, who also directed "Air Force One," drew on the talents of George Clooney, Mark Wahlberg, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio and other stars to bring the story to life. "The Perfect Storm" is actually about three storm systems that came together in October 1991 to create an unusually severe weather condition.



Meaning of the POW/MIA Recognition Day Poster

The somber black tones of the poster symbolize the darkness in our lives from those taken from us....those who are missing.

The black background with white border brings to mind the stark black POW/MIA flag.

In the upper left-hand corner is the missing American. This is our loved one, our son, our father, our brother. He is not with us. He is missing. Yet he is always with us.

The telegram symbolizes the link to the families of our missing...those who have for so long...sought answers.

The jet aircraft are flying the traditional "missing man" formation. Their comrade is not with them.

They know that someday, they will be able to say "three's in".

And the serviceman in the foreground symbolizes the soldier, sailor, airman, or Marine who wears the military uniform today.

Our commitment to them is firm. Our nation's obligation to them is steadfast.

We will never forget their service, nor their sacrifice.

And "LEST WE FORGET" is simply a reminder to all who love America, that our loved ones will always be with us...our commitment to them will never be forgotten.

Family members of missing personnel who would like to have a poster may contact their respective family organizations, or Mr. Larry Greer of the POW-Missing Personnel Office, Washington, D.C., (703) 602-2102, or download it from the office's Web site: www.dtic.mil/dpmo. Greer said his office will periodically post information on the web site about POW/MIA Recognition day, the third Friday in September, which this year is Sept. 15.

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